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# **Student Handbook**

## **2018-2019**

**Employer Identification Number: 46-0429382**

# Children's House Montessori School

## PHILOSOPHY

The basic idea of the Montessori philosophy of education is that children carry within themselves the person they will become. Montessori educators say the world of the child is full of sights and sounds which initially appear chaotic. From this chaos children must gradually create order, learn to distinguish among impressions that assail their senses and slowly but surely gain mastery of themselves and their environment.

Dr. Montessori developed what she called the Prepared Environment which inherently possesses a certain order and allows children to learn at their own speed, according to their own capabilities and in a non-competitive atmosphere. The acquisition of good manners and social graces are integral along with responsibility to community and fellow human beings.

Dr. Montessori recognized the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. The teacher prepares the environment, directs the activities and offers the child stimulation, but it is the child who learns, who is motivated through work to persist in a given task. Children who have acquired an "inner discipline" from their exposure to physical and mental order are the children who are free to learn. This is the premise of the Montessori philosophy. Montessori teaches children to observe, to think, and to discriminate. It introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline go hand-in-hand.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- To develop a positive attitude toward school and an enthusiasm for learning
- To develop a sense of high self-esteem and self-confidence
- To develop and foster an abiding curiosity
- To develop habits of concentration, initiative and persistence
- To develop an organized, sequential approach to problem solving and academic skills
- To develop self-motivation
- To develop independence, self-knowledge and self-discipline
- To develop sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the ability to discriminate
- To develop and embrace socially acceptable behavior
- To help each child reach their ultimate potential through high self-expectations
- To build positive relationships with adults and other children
- To develop an understanding of the importance of contributing to a community
- To realize their own "spirituality" (their inner spirit) and use that understanding to be a person willing to serve the common good of man

Please join us as we share this stimulating time in your child's life. We look forward to sharing our enthusiasm and our excitement about the Montessori approach to education with your family.

## MISSION STATEMENT

We will prepare a safe and nurturing Montessori environment for all children while maintaining South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) accreditation. Our classroom community, including our families, will be one where mutual respect and empathy are modeled and respected. We will meet all students at their individual developmental level and inspire them each day to reach their full potential – socially, physically, academically, and spiritually. We will encourage them to challenge themselves by highlighting their successes and assisting them as they refine their areas of difficulty. We will advocate for their individual and collective rights. Our classroom will be a joyful place where children can develop relationships and build self-confidence. Intrinsic gratification and pride in their accomplishments will be their motivation as they develop the love of learning. We will strive to make every day an excellent day for each student.

## CHILDREN'S HOUSE HISTORY

Children's House, A Montessori Preschool was founded in January 1990 by Janell Jewett. Having done her Montessori studies in London, England and her internship in West Germany, She wanted to bring a Montessori educational opportunity to the children and their families of Rapid City. Children's House opened its doors to one class of 5 preschool children and one teacher. It has grown to a maximum enrollment of 135 children in 5 classes with 6 teachers. With the growth, kindergarten classes were quickly added and Children's House, A Montessori Preschool soon became Children's House Montessori School. A 6-11 year old classroom was added in 2000.

The school, which is incorporated, has gone through facility changes. What began in a little house with a small back yard on Clark Street, moved to its current location in the summer of 1996. With over 1 ½ acres of wooded land, a completely renovated primary building, a new addition to the elementary building, two playground areas, a sledding hill, pumpkin and butterfly gardens and a playhouse, Children's House continues to offer learning opportunities for the young people of Rapid City.

Children's House Montessori became a State accredited school in 2001 and adheres to the requirements set down by the South Dakota Department of Education while following the tenets of a Montessori curriculum using Montessori materials.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

The morning classes begin at either 8:15 or 8:30 and end at 11:15 or 11:30 respectively. The afternoon class begins at 12:00 and ends at 3:00. The kindergarten program hours are 8:15-3:00. **Dismissal times for the morning classes are 11:15 & 11:30. Dismissal time for the afternoon class and kindergarten is 3:00.**

The elementary program begins at 8:00 and ends at 3:00. **Dismissal time for elementary is 3:00.**

**It is imperative that arrival and dismissal times are closely adhered to.** The time before class is vital for teacher preparation to ensure a smooth and productive day. Teachers have little time between classes so prompt pick-up time is also a necessity.

Promptness in a child's life is very important. **Tardiness is very disruptive to the teachers and to the children already in class.** We regard this as a preparation for continued education and expect all children to arrive on time and be picked up on time. Children who arrive late feel embarrassed and uncomfortable when entering a class already in progress. Children picked up late feel apprehension wondering if someone is coming for them. They respond with negative behavior.

A \$20.00 charge will be imposed for the first ½ hour or any increment of a ½ hour for any child that is picked up late (according to the school clock). You will be billed for this charge. Realizing everyone confronts difficulties occasionally, we ask that if you will be late, please call to inform your child's teacher. We appreciate your efforts to ensure this situation does not happen often.

## KINDERGARTEN/ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance for elementary students (including kindergarten) is mandatory according to State law. As a State accredited school we report student attendance to the Department of Education. Any student who has excessive absenteeism (15 days or more per calendar year) **OR** an excessive tardiness record will require an explanation to state officials by the administration and the family. **Excessive absenteeism may result in student retention.** When considering school absence please evaluate your child's attendance record and try to schedule family vacations during our regular school holidays. Excessive tardiness is documented and considered part of your child's attendance record. Every 6<sup>th</sup> tardy is equal to 1 day absence and will be considered as such in the total attendance record.

## TUITION

A non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of registration. This fee, \$50.00 for the primary and \$100.00 for the kindergarten and the elementary program, does not apply towards tuition. The security deposit - \$300.00 for primary & \$500.00 for kindergarten & elementary – will be applied to tuition; half will be applied to each semester's tuition. The registration fee and the deposit are non-refundable. Tuition must be paid prior to the beginning of each semester or through the on-line monthly payment option through FACTS. The tuition schedule is:

- 3 Day Program \$1680.00 annually/\$168.00 monthly (based on 10 monthly payments)
- 5 Day Program \$2590.00 annually/\$259.00 monthly (based on 10 monthly payments)
- 3 Day Enrichment \$1800.00 annually/\$180.00 monthly (based on 10 monthly payments)
- 5 Day Enrichment \$3000.00 annually/\$300.00 monthly (based on 10 monthly payments)
- Kindergarten \$5075.00 annually/\$507.50 monthly (based on 10 monthly payments)
- Elementary \$5075.00 annually/\$507.50 monthly (based on 10 monthly payments)

Checks should be made payable to Children's House Montessori. Tuition payments reserve your child's position so they cannot be prorated for holidays, illnesses or other absences. Tuition should be paid the first day of each semester or you should be enrolled in FACTS by the end of the first week of school. Tuition checks should be given to the Director, not handed to the classroom teachers. Students beginning in January will have an adjusted tuition rate.

There will be an additional materials fee for all students. This fee covers enrichment activities and materials associated with our program. This fee should be included with September's tuition payment. Materials fee is:

- Primary \$ 50.00 materials/activities fee
- Kindergarten/Elementary \$200.00 materials/activities fee
- Enrichment \$ 50.00 materials/activities fee

## ENRICHMENT

CHM offers an enrichment class for pre-kindergarten students. The three or five day enrichment program is an extension of their regular class. Children attending enrichment will need to pack a healthy lunch with appropriate quantities and little or no sweets (please see the section on healthy, waste-free lunches). They may bring a small blanket/ pillow that will be used for a quiet time scheduled each day after lunch. Please send these in a **cloth bag**. They will be sent home periodically for washing and should be returned the following week. Children attending the enrichment program will take part in the daily activities of the extended day while having the luxury of completing work from their regular program, making independent choices or participating in teacher guided activities.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Children's House will cancel classes for inclement weather any day the Rapid City Public Schools cancel classes. **If the RCPS is on a delayed morning schedule due to weather conditions, our morning preschool classes will be CANCELLED.** Kindergarten and Elementary classes will run on the same delayed schedule as the RCPS (ex: 2 hour delay). On blustery days you will receive a message from the school's One-Call system regarding cancellations or change in class schedule. You can also watch local television stations for school related cancellations.

## COMMUNICATION

Honest, open communication with your child's teacher is highly desirable and he/she should be the primary contact person for questions that may arise about your child. Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice during the year for the purpose of having a more in-depth discussion about your child's development, growth and adjustment to school.

A newsletter including a calendar of events will be sent home with your child on a regular basis – it will also be posted on the website. This will give you an update on each class, special activities and general school information. Please read the newsletter and post the calendar! We will be using a folder to help with communication for all children. Folders will be sent home on Wednesday and should be returned to the school, in your child's backpack, on Thursday. All families should check their child's backpack each day; kindergarten and elementary students should begin to take the responsibility to share the information brought home and ensure the folders are returned to school. **Please check for these folders each Wednesday and help your child remember to return them on Thursday.** Getting into a routine of checking/emptying backpacks DAILY helps with their independence and organizational skills. There will be \$5.00 charge for lost/missing folders.

The website ([www.chkids.net](http://www.chkids.net)) will be updated regularly. We encourage you to use this as your primary source for information. Before calling the school to clarify dates or information for upcoming events, please check the website. You should be able to get any information you may need pertaining to activities/events either on the website, in the newsletter or on the calendar. Information will also be posted on the outdoor whiteboards next to each door.

We will also use our One-Call system to contact families regarding upcoming events and important notices. Please make sure your contact information remains current so you will continue to receive important notices.

## CONFERENCES

Parent conferences are scheduled in October and March for preschool children and October and January for kindergarten and elementary students. Teachers or parents may also request special conferences any time during the year. You can help us by writing down questions, comments or concerns you have pertaining to your child on the space provided on your scheduled conference form. This is our time to share information about your child's development with you and your time to share your insights about your child's development with us. One family member from each family is expected to attend these conferences. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule if the assigned time does not work for you.

## SUPPLIES

Each class will be responsible for helping provide supplies. The list below indicates what your child will need to bring his/her first day of school. Other items may be requested on an as needed basis. Each student will be asked once during the school year to pick up and pay for one set of digital photos processed at Walgreen's.

### **ALL CHILDREN MUST BRING A BACKPACK OR BAG EVERY DAY**

- 5 Day 8:15 Preschoolers                      2 lg. bottles of liquid hand soap refills & 1 lg. container of dishwasher pods
- 5 Day 8:30 Preschoolers                      1 multi pack toilet bowl cleaner & 1 lg. package paper towels
- 3 Day 8:15 Preschoolers                      1 box gallon size ziplock bags & 1 box 5 oz. Dixie cups
- 3 Day 8:30 Preschool                         1 box sandwich ziplock bags & 2 boxes of 16 crayons
  
- 12:00 Preschoolers                            1 gal. bleach & 1 box of 5 oz. Dixie cups





## NO CELL PHONE CAMPUS

CHM is a no cell phone campus. Because of the hazards associated with using a cell phone while driving, we ask that you do not pull into the parking lot or exit the parking lot while on your cell phone. We ask that once on campus, you refrain from using your cell phone. Your children need and deserve your uninterrupted attention while you are dropping them off or picking them up from school. We appreciate your cooperation with this request.

## PICKING UP STUDENTS

For your child's protection, we will not release any child to someone other than a parent or persons listed on the Emergency Information Form. **If you are not picking up, please let the person who is picking up know that we may ask them to show proof of identification prior to releasing your child.** We do not mean to offend anyone by asking for identification, we do it for your child's safety. Please advise a teacher if your child will be picked up by someone other than you. It is imperative that you keep the school up-to-date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and all pertinent information.

## LOADING AND UNLOADING

Please park in **designated spaces** or on West Main Street west of the sign. **DO NOT** park at the ends of the buildings – it creates a scenario for accidents. Keeping traffic moving ensures less congestion on West Main Street. Keep your child **IN HAND** while crossing the parking lot both before and after school. Do not allow them to run across the parking lot alone. Larger vehicles cannot see the children when they are backing up. We will visit with the children about parking lot safety and we ask that you please do the same.

We would also request that the morning classes depart the parking lot soon after drop off and pick up. The reason for the 15 minute staggered start time is to eliminate parking lot congestion. If the 8:15 class parents remain in the parking lot, it causes congestion when the 8:30 class arrives. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

## SNACKS

Children's House maintains a **NO PEANUT environment.** Please do not send any peanuts or peanut related products to school with your child.

At the beginning of the school year we will enjoy our snack together. As the children become familiar with pouring, serving and cleaning up, we will go to individual snack time. This allows for your child to choose when they would like snack and it encourages their independence.

Except for special occasions, the drink of choice will be water. We believe this is the healthiest choice and the one that generates the least concern for food allergies. At least once during the year, each child will be asked to bring **2 boxes of crackers** (healthy crackers, please) **and a large bag of fruit or vegetables** (enough for 26 students for the week) for group snack.

Children's House will encourage positive environmental awareness and application at every possible opportunity. To this end the children will use glass plates, plastic or glass glasses and cloth napkins. All jars and cans are rinsed according to guidelines set down by Waste Management and picked up weekly as part of our commitment to the earth and our children. All aluminum cans will be have the tabs removed (these are given to McDonald's for the Ronald McDonald House) and crushed by the children in a practical life activity. If you would like to provide empty pop cans for this activity, please **rinse them out** and bring them dry and bagged.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR HEALTHY, WASTE-FREE LUNCHES

(Kindergarten, Elementary, Enrichment)

We encourage you to pack a healthy, waste-free lunch. This could include a sandwich or another main dish, fresh fruit and/or fresh vegetables in a **reusable** container/s. Please include a cloth napkin, **reusable** silverware, drink containers and lunch boxes. If you include a treat, please make sure it is small. Children will be required to eat their regular lunch before having their treat. We will have water for them to drink but if you send a drink, please ensure it is healthy.

## CLOTHING

Play clothes are encouraged-**simple** (clothing with no advertising logos or cartoon characters is preferred), **washable** (we never know when a painting opportunity may present itself!) and **easy to manage**. Jogging suits or elastic waist pants are great for the primary students. Dressing and bathroom needs are areas in which independence is especially emphasized. In order for the preschool children to become self-sufficient, their clothing must be easy for them to fasten and unfasten. Bib overalls and belt buckles are very difficult for most children to manage. Elementary students should ensure their clothing is appropriate for a school setting and is void of advertising, cartoon characters or trendy topics.

Please **do not send your child to school wearing cowboy boots, clogs or flip flops**. They can be dangerous and are a deterrent to active participation in all aspects of school activity. **Sneakers or rubber soled shoes are recommended. Velcro shoes are preferred unless your child can tie.** Remember the children take off and put on their own shoes at school. If you are having difficulty getting your child's shoes on, your child will have difficulty getting them on!!

All children, teachers and volunteers will be required to remove their shoes upon entering the school. You may send a rubber or leather sole slipper for your child. These should remain at school and your child's name **MUST** appear somewhere in the slipper.

Think of the changeable weather and dress your child warmly. Provide sweaters and jackets (also mittens, caps and boots in winter) even on sunny fall and spring days. We will spend some time outside everyday in all but the worst of weather. A jacket in the fall and spring and dry socks in the winter for the kindergarten/elementary students kept in the backpack can be lifesavers. Remember, if the zipper on your child's coat doesn't work for you, it won't work for us!

Please ensure **ALL REMOVEABLE CLOTHING IS MARKED** with your child's name. It is not unusual for more than one child to have identical coats, boots, mittens or sweaters.

**BACKPACKS** should be brought to school every day and should be large enough to hold student folders, hats, mittens and jackets. Even though the small ones are cute, they are not very practical.

## TOILET PROCEDURES

All children attending CHM must be **TOTALLY** proficient in regards to bathroom needs and procedures. We will ensure children know where the bathroom is and that they know the rules in regards to flushing toilets and washing hands. The children are allowed to go to the bathroom at any time. In case of an accident, you may be notified. If your child has an accident, be assured your child's personal well being will be our main priority and the situation will be handled discreetly to avoid any embarrassment for your child. If you have concerns about your child's independence, a pair of socks, underwear and pants can be stored in a Ziploc bag at the bottom of their backpack.

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are vital for the success of our program. **Each family is EXPECTED to volunteer in some capacity during the school year. Our hope is that each family will be able to contribute a minimum of 10 hours to the school during the year.** The time you give enriches your child's school experience. As you fill out the parent volunteer form, we ask you to carefully consider when you can give time in the classroom, at home doing classroom work or helping with a school event. If you will be volunteering in the classroom, we ask that you please use slippers. You will be given a guideline to assist you with your new "job" and to help you know the classroom rules. You will be asked to sign a copy of classroom rules and adhere to the confidentiality clause. You will be required to wear a Volunteer Name Tag when helping at school. Because volunteer hours are tracked for Grant application purposes, we will ask that you sign in and sign out in order to keep track of volunteer hours.

## HOLIDAYS

The holidays we celebrate at CHM are Harvest/Thanksgiving, Winter, Valentine's Day and Spring. We have an Art Show in May. Special activities will be planned in conjunction with each holiday. Our party days are kept very low key. Each child will be asked to bring special assigned treats or party supplies to one party during the year. Specific assignments will be given to each child one week prior to the party they are providing for. You may be asked to help in the classroom the day of the party your child is assigned to.

## ILLNESS

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. Upon enrollment you will be required to submit a copy of your child's immunization records to ensure they are up to date. Kindergarten students and any elementary student new to CHM must submit their immunizations on the form provided by the State Department of Health. Preschool students may submit a copy of their child's immunization form UNLESS they are NOT immunized. In that case they must also submit the form provided by the State Department of Health.

Your child may be sent home if any symptoms of illness appear during the day. In such cases your child will be isolated from the others and made comfortable. You will be contacted immediately to come pick him/her up. Please ensure the contact information on your emergency card is current and accurate.

### **KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF HE/SHE:**

- Has a fever or has had one during the previous 24 hours
- Has vomited or had diarrhea during the previous 24 hours
- Has a heavy nasal discharge
- Has a constant cough
- Complains of a sore throat, earache or headache

- Has a rash
- Is fussy, cranky, and generally out of sorts
- Is just tired. Rest at such times may prevent the development of a serious illness
- Has a symptom of a possible communicable disease. Please notify the school if your child does have a communicable disease

The school will send home notes at the onset of a communicable disease (as in the case of chicken pox, mononucleosis) or head lice. We will post the recurrence of subsequent cases on the white board by each classroom.

Your child may come to school if a cold is over but a minor nasal drip remains. **If your child is too sick to play outside, they are too sick to be at school.** In case of an accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent/guardian. If we cannot reach you, we will call the person listed on your Emergency Information Card and finally your physician. If necessary, we will call an ambulance. The school will maintain a consent form agreeing to this arrangement. It is imperative that you keep the school up-to-date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and all pertinent information.

### **MEDICAL RELEASE**

CHM does not administer medications. If your child is in need of medicine during their time at school, parents/guardians will need to make arrangements for that dosage to be administered. If your child has a severe allergy and requires an Epi-pen, a dose must be secured in the school lock box, a medical release form must be completed and staff informed on the usage of the Epi-pen. It is imperative that all allergies are noted on the Emergency Card and updated as needed. Please note that cough drops are also medicine and will be kept in the office as well, with parent form completed.

### **CHILDREN'S HOUSE MONTESSORI'S SECURITY ACCESS POLICY**

For increased safety of all members of the Children's House Montessori community, a keyless entry security system for entrance into the school has been installed. The following guidelines will be followed by CHM personnel who will have access to the required keycards for entrance into CHM's buildings.

#### **Keyless Entry Device (Fob) Distribution**

- While under contract, staff members will be given a keyless entry device (fob) that will allow access to the school 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. (The first fob will be free; however, lost or damaged fobs will be subject to the replacement cost)
- Staff members will have access to all CHM's doors.
- Families will have access through the office door and their child's classroom door according to the student's class schedule. Families using early drop off will have access to the 8:15 door beginning at 7:30.
- Other positions related to the school (board or approved community volunteers) may have a key but are subject to BOD approval prior to the issuance of a keyless entry device.